

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCH ARSON

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, there have been 32 suspicious fires at African-American churches across the United States since 1995. It is time for Congress to stand up and speak out.

Last Thursday, when the Matthews-Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC, became another one of the churches to be burned over the past 18 months, the shock and amazement of this deed left me dazed and numb.

How could anyone violate what is most precious to our society? That is why I want to urge all of my colleagues to use this week to rise in swift and resounding voices to condemn this evil and to demonstrate that it will not be tolerated.

First, we should all support the bipartisan legislation introduced by our colleagues, Mr. CONYERS and Mr. HYDE. That legislation would make it easier to bring prosecutions and stiffen the penalties against those who target houses of worship.

Second, I would urge support for a resolution I am introducing, calling on the collective outrage of Congress and condemning the arson. And, finally, we should all, work within our respective communities to help prevent future arson.

There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak. Now is a time to speak.

THE ANSWERS AND EXCUSES, MY FRIENDS, ARE BLOWING IN THE WIND

(Mr. FUNDERBURK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, how many FBI files must a President search before he becomes a President? The answers and excuses, my friends, are blowing in the wind, the excuses are blowing in the wind.

How long must 341 files be kept until the Clinton administration has a chance to read them? The answers and excuses, my friends, are blowing in the wind, the excuses are blowing in the wind.

How many White House employees does it take to gather an enemies list? The answers and excuses, my friends, are blowing in the wind, the excuses are blowing in the wind.

Finally, how long does it take before the Clinton administration puts an end to all the coverups? The answer, Mr. Speaker, appears to be blowing in the White House wind.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER THAN EMPTY REPUBLICAN RHETORIC

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, for over 50 years veterans' programs and benefits have been viewed as matters far too important for partisan bickering. Democrats and Republicans worked together to create the most generous and successful array of veterans' programs in the world.

Unfortunately, this bipartisan tradition supporting veterans' matters is in the process of being destroyed by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We have all heard and read the rhetoric put out by our Republican colleagues asserting their strong support for our Nation's veterans, and they have implied that President Clinton does not care about veterans; in fact, that he would balance the budget on the backs of veterans.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. The Republican budget that has been presented for fiscal year 1997 slashes the President's request for veterans' funding by \$573 million. Our Nation's veterans deserve better than empty Republican rhetoric. They have more than earned our real support and respect.

Mr. Speaker, let us quit playing games with this special group of citizens and get down to the hard work of establishing and maintaining meaningful programs and benefits for our veterans.

IT MAKES YOU WONDER, DOESN'T IT?

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, during the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton was asked to sign a waiver that would have authorized the FBI to make public any files that revealed his anti-Vietnam war activity. He refused. In fact here is what his press secretary said at the time: "It's a personal file. He's not going to do it."

But after the election, after Bill Clinton was in the White House, suddenly all of his anxieties about looking through other people's FBI files disappeared into thin air. Someone at the White House authorized a search of 341 Reagan and Bush administration employees, including James Baker, the Secretary of State.

So, let me get this straight. The President who was morally indignant at anyone wanting to look at his FBI file, is now looking through the FBI files of his political opponents.

It makes you wonder, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). The Chair reminds Members that they are not to use personal references to the President of the United States.

WHITE HOUSE MISTAKENLY OBTAINS SECRET FBI FILES

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. The White House said they made a mistake when they improperly obtained secret FBI files on 339 Americans who just happened to be friends of Mr. Reagan and Mr. Bush. Mistake? Who is kidding whom here? This was a deliberate political act. It is disgusting. It is wrong.

But what really grabs me is how many ways can you destroy a family? Billy Dale, the boss of the travel office, targeted, fired, acquitted in less than 90 minutes. Shame, ladies and gentlemen. Whether it is a Democrat or a Republican, anyone who uses the power of the FBI and the IRS to target political opponents is not only wrong, they may have committed a crime.

There should be an investigation. And, as a Democrat, I say when we play partisanship with political machinations like this, we throw the Constitution out.

WHITE HOUSE "SO WHAT" RESPONSE

(Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, it was reported over the weekend that the Clinton administration had used the FBI to obtain the confidential records of former Reagan and Bush administrations employees. The White House passed this off as a mere bureaucratic mistake; an oversight not to be repeated; really, just a small matter that is not worthy of a serious examination.

Mr. Speaker, I long ago stopped trying to figure out the Clinton administration. Their response to any accusation of improper or illegal activity is always the same: So what.

It goes something like this; Whitewater, so what. Troopergate, so what. Cattle futures, so what. Travelgate, so what. Cabinet members resigning in disgrace, so what. Twenty-two White House officials with legal defense funds, so what. Paula Jones, so what.

Mr. Speaker, the White House's "so what" response to the improper or illegal use of the FBI only confirms that they are hiding something from the American people.

REPUBLICANS SERVING WARMED-OVER VERSION OF REJECTED MEDICARE PLAN

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I, for one, give the new majority credit for